

Town of Amenia
Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee
May 15, 2006

Present: Mark Doyle, Rudy Eschbach, George Fenn, Bill Flood, Darlene Riemer

Guests: Jeffrey Stark, the new owner of Keane Stud Farm, Brandee Nelson, Engineer. Bob Houlihan, Tom Werner

The minutes of May 8 were briefly discussed and approved.

Mark Doyle read a note he received from Charlotte Murphy regarding the statistics of Taconic DDSO: " There are 200 consumers at the facility currently - about one third are severely retarded and very old. About two thirds are prisoners. There are about 1200 employees total. The State is planning to build a central building surrounded by cottages on the south end for increased 'prisoner' population".

- R. Eschbach: what is the level of security at the facility and what kind of prisoners are housed there?

- D. Riemer: the committee should find out whether the employees are local residents.

- M. Doyle : no word yet from J. Russell or P. Pinnell after the tour of Amenia.

- M. Doyle showed maps of soil mining overlays he has obtained from DEC. The Committee decided to identify all possible locations in their maps as "resource sites" and outline the process necessary for permits and leave it at that.

- M. Doyle: Maps obtained from DC Planning are hard to read. Points to be addressed for scenic overlay maps are: roadside buffers, scenic roads and the rail trail. A computerized map of sites visible from two or three viewpoints do not include areas in SR, HR or HM districts. It becomes complicated if one includes ridge lines and historic scenic views on the map and requires review from the Planning Board. J. Russell's language (page 20, 121.14.1) "visible from all publicly accessible places as defined in 121.74" needs to be defined to a more limited scope.

D. Riemer presented an article for review by the Committee intended for local papers and explaining districts and overlays - as it is rather long , it should be broken up into two parts.

Jeffrey Stark the new owner of the Keane Stud Farm presented his proposal for the site. He has contracted to buy an additional 214 acres from Syms on the east side of Depot Hill road - a total of 478 acres.

The Keane Stud operation and the Syms fields currently in agriculture are to be preserved - around those two uses an equestrian community is planned including 2 indoor arenas, (open to the public), horse trails, hiking trails.

J. Stark complimented the Committee on its work specifically the well achieved compromise between development and preservation. He pointed out two aspects of the zoning code which might present problems for his planned development:

1. Work force housing: According to the code, (Page 65, section 121.42, Page 69 section 11) there will be a body which determines who the residents of work force housing will be. That does not work for them as they need to be able to house their own employees.
2. The current housing for employees is unattractive, cheaply constructed and in poor condition and needs to be torn down.

The houses planned within a home owners association, will be in the 1 Million range; creating work force housing by the same standards (as required in the language on page 65) would be unacceptable. Instead, they plan to construct apartment buildings looking much like old barns. The Home Owners Association will retain ownership of all buildings and be responsible for their upkeep.

R. Eschbach agreed in principle and said that more work has to be done on this section- M. Doyle said that the provisions were designed for situations in which the original developer does not retain ownership and may not apply here.

J. Stark went on to say that at this time he has not decided what the number of buildings will be - that depends in large part on the final zoning. He then showed a brochure of a development in Minneapolis, (Jackson Meadows) to give the Committee an idea of the architectural designs he intends to follow. However, he is planning to cluster the units on his property (app. 100) in a different way - without surrounding yardage. If the zoning permitted 200 units and only 100 units are built,

he - or the home owners - could recover some of the initial investment, about \$10 million, through conservation easements.

Brandee Nelson next showed a map which outlines the dimension of the proposed development and said that RA - ten acre zoning - represents a 90% reduction in development potential; a change to RR (five acre zoning) would be more beneficial to the investors.

M. Doyle: the Committee's intention is to provide zoning which makes sense and the rationale for zone boundaries has to be the same for all parts of town.

B. Flood suggested that an overlay district similar to a resort overlay might make sense here as the project represents closely what the Town wants to happen in the location. M. Doyle: A resort overlay takes effect, if there is a project - zoning is there whether there is a

project or not. It is important to keep the rationale for RA and RR consistent.

Responding to R. Eschbach's question as to the exact number of houses to be build, J. Stark said he could not be specific until all topographical maps are available to him and his landscape architect has had a chance to study them and put together a final design. He reiterated that, in order to support the infrastructure of the indoor arenas about 100 homes will be required.

M. Doyle: The model of "common ownership" or "association ownership" without subdivisions is something that is likely to be applied to other large properties and is a goal for the community and should be encouraged. J. Stark: the intention is to develop a project that is sensitive to land conservation and is replicable in other communities.

R. Eschbach wondered, if the vacant land which belongs to the Catholic church opposite the Jeep dealership might be suitable for work force housing.

Mining: R. Eschbach talked about the process of indicating suitable mining areas and it was generally accepted that the Gravel Soils map from the Action Amendments should be used in the Natural Resources Inventory for this purpose.

HC zoning for the restaurant at the intersection of Routes 44 and 83 was discussed and D. Riemer suggested a change to HR - the tiny triangle should not have HC zoning in order to prevent a gas station opening in that location in the future. There was general agreement to have a detailed review of the area using large-scale maps and with the participation of J. Russell.

The need for an Historic designation was discussed and it was agreed that, should the Town decide not to have an Historic District, placing the inventory of historic buildings in the NRI was the next best approach.

D. Riemer: the buildings proposed in HR, non-residential, 5000 sq ft and four stories high are too big and should be reduced to about 2,500 sq ft.. R. Eschbach: the fire department does not have the kind of equipment needed for four story buildings. M. Doyle: this needs to be discussed with J. Russell.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 22 at 7:00 PM.

Submitted by Monique Montaigne
May 21, 2006